



The Afterlife: Essays and Criticism

Penelope Fitzgerald, Many Kirkby

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From one of the best-loved contemporary novelists, previously uncollected essays on books, writers, places, and the author's own life and works . In this generous, posthumous collection of her literary essays, Penelope Fitzgerald explores what John Milton called the "life beyond life" of writers -their afterlife in the hearts and minds of readers and in the imaginations of their critics and biographers. Here are Fitzgerald's brilliant introductions to Jane Austen's *Emma* and George Eliot's *Middlemarch* . Here are a marvelously quick-witted literary journalist's reviews of her fellow fiction writers (Brookner, Ishiguro, Amy Tan) and fellow biographers (Holroyd, Karl, Holmes). Here, especially, are extended explorations of "minor" writers -the authors of modest, overlooked, but fully achieved imaginative works-the celebration of which reveals so much about Penelope Fitzgerald's own literary sensibility: the lyric poet Charlotte Mew, the ghost-story writer M. R. James, and the cartoonists and humorists of *Punch*. Rounded out by travel pieces, autobiography, and essays on the craft of fiction, *The Afterlife* is one of the most engaging books about books since Virginia Woolf's *The Common Reader* .

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